



AVAQMD

Vol. 11 No. 1 - Summer 2007

# AIR WAVES

*A publication of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District*

## AVAQMD Turns 10 Years Old

July 1, 2007 marked the 10-year anniversary of the inception of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District, California's 35<sup>th</sup> air district and the Los Angeles County High Desert's own air agency.

"Since its inception, the District has worked hard to protect the Antelope Valley's legendary air



AVAQMD Air Quality Specialist Sally Sparks chats with Ron Scott of Mission Linen and Louis Darbeau of LA County DPW Roads during a 10 Year Open House held on July 11th.



AVAQMD Board members prepare to celebrate the District's 10 year anniversary during the July 17 Board meeting.

quality while supporting strong and sustainable growth," stated Operations Manager Bret Banks. "We will continue to do the same in the years to come."

The movement to separate the Antelope Valley out of the South Coast Air Quality Management District began in 1991, when the Antelope Valley

Board of Trade formed an air quality task force to address local business' concerns about the congruity of applying the same regulatory requirements to AV businesses, as those required for industry in the polluted Los Angeles basin. Five years later, in 1996, Senator William "Pete" Knight introduced Assembly Bill 2666, which created a separate, locally controlled air district for the Antelope Valley.

Mandated by state and federal laws, the AVAQMD regulates stationary sources of air pollution, and is overseen by a Governing Board comprised of two appointees from the City of Lancaster, two from the City of Palmdale, two from Los Angeles County's Fifth Supervisorial District and one Public Member appointed by the balance of the Board.

In 2002, the District transitioned from an air pollution control district to an air quality

*Continued on pg. 11*

## District Awards Over \$1 Million in Lower Emission Heavy-Duty Engine Grants

Nearly every year, the District serves as a conduit for local businesses to apply for and receive grant funds through the state's Carl Moyer Program. The program funds projects that reduce smog-forming emissions from heavy-duty vehicles and other mobile equipment operated in the Antelope Valley.

Under the Moyer Program, state funds are disbursed to local entities via participating air districts for the purpose of offsetting the incremental cost of replacing heavy-duty engines or equipment, with cleaner vehicles and equipment, whose emissions fall below applicable state and federal standards. For example, a company may be able to purchase a new truck that meets the state's minimum standards for \$100,000, or buy a lower-emission truck for \$125,000. The

offsetting cost (\$25,000) necessary to purchase the lower-emission truck is eligible for funding through the Moyer Program.

Heavy-duty trucks produce 11 times more nitrogen oxide emissions on a per-mile basis than do light-duty passenger vehicles. Operations Manager Bret Banks stated that engines on trucks are usually rebuilt every five to six years, and when businesses "repower" or install an engine with lower emissions, it saves the company on fuel costs.

"Applications are reviewed and ranked according to cost effectiveness of emission reductions occurring within District boundaries," stated Roseanna Navarro-

Brasington, Transportation Coordinator for the AVAQMD.

In March, the District awarded \$310,800 in

Moyer Funds to The Miller Equipment Company for the retrofit of seven off-road diesel fueled motor graders with level 3 diesel particulate traps which will reduce PM emissions by at least 85%, amounting to 3.1 tons of particulate matter.

In May, the Governing Board approved three additional projects for funding. *Cont'd on pg. 11*





*Air Waves is a publication  
of the Antelope Valley  
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*The Antelope Valley...  
It's a Breath of Fresh Air!*

**AIR WAVES**

## **AIR WAVES**

### **Nominations Sought for 2006/2007 William "Pete" Knight AIRE Awards**

In homage to his pivotal role in the creation of the AVAQMD as a separate and locally governed air agency, the AVAQMD is again seeking nominations for the 2006/2007 Wm. "Pete" Knight Memorial AIRE (Achievement in Reducing Emissions) Awards.

The AIRE awards recognize local entities or individuals who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to protecting air quality within the AVAQMD's boundaries.

Each year, the AIRE Awards are presented in conjunction with National Pollution Prevention Week, September 17-23. According to Executive Director Eldon Heaston, "By recognizing individuals and organizations that go the extra mile to protect air quality, the AVAQMD seeks to inspire others to follow their lead in implementing creative and effective ways of reducing air pollution."

In 2006, the following recipients were recognized with the AIRE awards: **The Antelope Valley Environmental Collection Center**, a household hazardous waste collection facility created through a public-private partnership between five agencies, was recognized for its role in reducing air pollution from hazardous household and electronic wastes; and **Larry Levin**, current president of the L.A. County Illegal Dumping Task Force, was honored for his tireless efforts towards eliminating illegal waste disposal in the Antelope Valley's open lands.

Applications will be accepted through August 17, 2007. For an application package, call the AVAQMD at (661) 723-8070 or visit the District's Web site at [www.avaqmd.ca.gov](http://www.avaqmd.ca.gov).

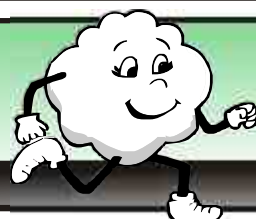


**2005/2006 AIRE Award recipients, pictured with AVAQMD Governing Board Members, left to right:** Board Member Ken McCoy; Board Member Ron Smith; Board Member Henry Hearn; Board Member Mike Roberts; Recipient Larry Levin; Recipients for the City of Palmdale, Jennifer Corio, Timothy Hughes and David Wu; Co-Presenter Mrs. Gail Knight; and AVAQMD Executive Director Eldon Heaston.

### **COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES**

**July 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 — June 30<sup>th</sup> 2007**

Complaints	81
Inspections: Total Facilities	434
Notices of Violation (NOVs)	40



**Air Quality is  
Everyone's Business !**

## AIR WAVES

# EPA Proposes Stronger Ozone Standards

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the EPA announced that they are proposing to strengthen the nation's air quality standards for ground-level ozone, revising the standards for the first time since 1997. The proposal is based on the most recent scientific evidence about the health effects of ozone -- the primary component of smog. The proposed revisions reflect new scientific evidence about ozone and its effects on people and public welfare.

The proposal recommends an ozone standard within a range of 0.070 to 0.075 parts per million (ppm). EPA also is taking comments on alternative standards within a range from 0.060 ppm up to the level of the current 8-hour ozone standard, which is 0.08 ppm.

Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but is created through a reaction of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compound emissions in the presence of sunlight. Emissions from industrial facilities, electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents are the major man-made sources of these ozone precursors.

For more information on the proposed standard, <http://epa.gov/groundlevelozone>

# AV Schools Receive \$416,000 to Lower School Bus Emissions

The Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency (AVSTA), Eastside School District and Wilsona School District were recently awarded a combined total of \$416,000 in funds made available through the California Air Resources Board's Lower Emission School Bus Program, which is administered by local air districts.



In March, the AVAQMD awarded \$244,000 to AVSTA for the replacement of two pre-1977 diesel fueled school busses with new lower emission diesel fueled busses. Eastside School District was awarded \$122,000 to replace one pre-1977 diesel fueled school bus. In June, the Board also voted to award Wilsona School District

\$50,000 towards the repowering of two 1990 school busses, with lower emission diesel engines.

Public school districts and joint power authorities are eligible to apply for funding under this Program. For more information on funds that may be available under the Lower Emission School Bus Program through the AVAQMD, please contact Operations Manager Bret Banks at (661) 723-8070.

## Riding the Airwaves... AVAQMD Outreach Events

### Outreach In Full Bloom At The 17th Annual Poppy Festival

In celebration of its beautiful flower, the City of Lancaster hosted it's 17th annual California Poppy Festival in April. The yearly event celebrates and promotes environmental awareness in a fun family atmosphere.

During the event, the District shared a booth with the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA). Operations Manager Bret Banks, Air Quality Specialist Sally Sparks and AVTA representative Al Rangel greeted festival attendees with information on local air quality, District services, transportation alternatives, bus schedules, and MetroLink/Amtrak schedules.

More than 1,200 festival visitors stopped by the AVAQMD/AVTA booth during the two-day event. "It was a great opportunity to meet with the public we serve," said Banks.

### AVAQMD/AVTA Partner for Cleaner Air At Antelope Valley College Earth Day Event

Since 2001, the AVAQMD and the Antelope Valley Transit Authority have partnered to promote clean air and the benefits of ridesharing during community events. "Our missions go hand-in-hand," commented Operations Manager Bret Banks. Al Rangel, AVTA representative added, "Our agencies are like the dynamic duo for air quality protection." The agencies again joined forces as Rangel and Banks manned a booth during the Antelope Valley College Earth Day Celebration on April 25th. The "dynamic duo" presented transportation alternatives and air quality information to some 500 students. Other participants included Lancaster Honda, Sierra Toyota and Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.



## Robertson's Honda Becomes 1<sup>st</sup> Dealer in the US to Offer Public CNG Station

On Wednesday, May 24, Robertson's Palmdale Honda dealership celebrated the opening of their new public natural gas pumping station, the third located within the AVAQMD's jurisdiction, the 79<sup>th</sup> such station in Southern California, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Honda dealership in the country to offer a public access Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station.



Mike Dispenza, (above), AVAQMD Chairman & Palmdale Mayor Pro Tem, gives accolades to Robertson's Palmdale Honda for their commitment to the environment during a "welcome-to-the-pump" party on May 24, 2007.

dependence on foreign oil. Our field office in Lancaster has one of the Hondas (GX)," stated Banks.

Ralph Gonzales of Palmdale said he bought his Civic in February and has a home refueling station. He said the station cost \$3,500 and another \$1,500 to install. "I got a \$2,000 rebate check from the AVAQMD and a \$1,000 federal tax credit," he said. "I get 35 miles to the gallon, 230 to 240 miles to the tank." When he bought the car, Gonzales said, "I told myself, 'Let's do the smart thing, be clean and not create emissions.'"

According to Annabel Cook of Honda's Corporate Outreach, "It takes a special dealership to step up and support environmental fuels." She added, "We sell this car in all 50 states and in 100 dealerships. Robertson's Honda is the first in the nation to have a public fueling station."

A "welcome-to-the-pump" party was hosted by owners Ron and Yvett Emard and the Palmdale Chamber of Commerce, with featured comments by Palmdale Mayor Pro Tem Mike Dispenza, who also spoke as Chairman of the AVAQMD; David Christensen, Public Affairs Manager, Sempra Energy/The Gas Co.; Bret Banks, Operations Manager of the AVAQMD, and Curtis Martin, Alternative Fuels Specialist for Robertson's Palmdale Honda.

Dispenza said the AVAQMD provided a \$90,000 grant towards construction of the station, adding that, "We have those kinds of grants available to others." Dispenza added that to date, Robertson's Palmdale Honda has sold 24 Honda Civic GXs, and six home refueling stations are now installed in the Valley.

"We have been working hard to bring this technology to the Valley. It is definitely a cleaner form of transportation and it reduces our

Christensen stated the gas used to fuel the vehicles "is the same natural gas used in homes and businesses, only pumped at a higher pressure."

Natural gas vehicle drivers can install their own personal pumping stations at home, drawing on the same source they already have for heating and cooking. The little stations, nick-named "Phill," need to pump overnight to fill the eight-gallon gasoline equivalent tank; commercial pumps work considerably faster.

The three public natural gas stations within the AVAQMD's jurisdiction are located at: 1) Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency, 670 West Ave. L-8, Lancaster; 2) Pinnacle/SoCal Gas Base, 44416 Division St., Lancaster; and 3) Robertson's Palmdale Honda, 455 Auto Vista Drive, Palmdale. The AVAQMD provided funding towards the construction of all three stations.

## Students Awarded AVAQMD Scholarships

On May 21, 2007, during Serrano High School's Senior Awards Night, Breana Christian and Christina Perez were each presented with \$500 as the 2007 recipients of the AVAQMD's Environmental Scholarship Awards in recognition of academic excellence and outstanding dedication to the community and the environment.

The AVAQMD Governing Board established the scholarship endowment fund in 2001. Funds for the program originate from fines collected by the AVAQMD through the settlement of air quality violations in the region. During the course of settling enforcement actions with a regulatory air agency, a violator may agree to an alternative form of penalty known as a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP), as part of the settlement. In accordance with policies set forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California EPA, environmental education scholarships are one type of project which may be funded with penalty monies collected under such an agreement.

Both graduates plan to attend UCLA this coming fall. Breana plans to pursue a major in Biological Science with a minor in Marine Biology.

Her activities include: volunteering at a local homeless shelter, working with the VIP Olympics and cleaning up trash from local forests. "I am concerned about global warming and have done a great deal of research upon this issue...I also support the idea of keeping the environment and oceans clean for ourselves in the present, future generations, and our animals," Breana wrote in her scholarship application.

Christina describes herself as compassionate, determined and honest. She plans to pursue a career in medicine for mental illness and wants to be pediatrician. "I have had a very serious interest in the environment since I was a child," stated Christina, adding, "I have realized that there will be many consequences that our generation and coming generations will have to face because of our environmental negligence." Christina plan to volunteer with the Peace Corps.

According to AVAQMD Executive Director Eldon Heaston, the scholarship program symbolizes the District's commitment to the community and to providing educational opportunities for tomorrow's leaders.

## AIR QUALITY ALERT Protect Yourself From Smog

**W**ith the 2007 smog season well underway, the following tips can help protect the ones you love this ozone season:

- Remember that when you exercise, do yard work or other strenuous activities, you increase your breathing rate, and inhale more pollution into your lungs.
- Reduce your exposure by using Air Quality Index (AQI) forecasts to help plan your day. When the forecast predicts elevated levels of pollution, protect your health by reducing your exposure — especially if you are part of a sensitive group. This includes people with respiratory or heart diseases, young children and the elderly.
- How do you reduce your exposure when air quality is poor? Reschedule strenuous activities for a time when air quality is expected to be better. You can also scale back on vigorous activities, such as walking instead of jogging. Small changes can help protect your lungs and heart.
- Some people check the weather forecast every day; checking the AQI is just as important, since it's a useful tool that tells you how healthy or unhealthy the air is.

**The AQI is a fast and effective way to let you know:**

- What today's air pollution levels will be in your area;
- Who is at risk from that pollution; and
- Simple steps you can take to protect your health.

You can view local air quality forecasts by logging on to the AVAQMD's web site at [www.avaqmd.ca.gov](http://www.avaqmd.ca.gov), or visiting the EPA's AIRNow Web page at [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov). At the EPA Web site, you can also sign up for EnviroFlash, and e-mail and pager notification services that alert you when local air quality reaches certain levels.



Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good (GREEN)	0-50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate (YELLOW)	51-100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (ORANGE)	101-150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy (RED)	151-200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy (PURPLE)	201-300	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous (MAROON)	> 300	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

## AV Educator Named 2007 MEEC Teacher of the Year

More than sixty educators, students, business and civic leaders joined in recognizing MEEC's 2007 Teacher of the Year at the Spring Valley Lake Country Club in Victorville on April 26<sup>th</sup> during the annual awards banquet.

AV educator Mary O'Connell took top honors as Teacher of the Year for her work creating an Environmental Career Pathway at Eastside High School in Lancaster.

O'Connell, a Biology Teacher and Science Department Head, was praised by her principal Tom Grady. "Mary is the kind of teacher that turns kids onto science and our test scores prove it," Grady said during the presentation of her award. O'Connell was presented with a commemorative Teacher of the Year plaque and a \$300 prize for her work with students in the Antelope Valley Union High School District.

Barbara Ward-Lawe and Wendi Rodriguez were each named MEEC Teachers of Excellence for their work with students and the community in the Hesperia Unified School District and the Snowline Joint Unified School District, respectively. Although Barbara is a high school counselor at Hesperia's Community Day School, she has successfully trained students on how to give effective presentations to other students, teachers and the community on ways to conserve energy. She is also instrumental in helping inspire her students to volunteer as aides for environmental workshops, activities and community clean ups.

Wendi, an eighth grade teacher at Heritage School in Phelan, keeps her students involved in a variety of environmental projects including taking them on annual whale watching trips and raising and caring for exotic fish. She is also the advisor for the school's Marine Society.



2007 Mojave Environmental Education Consortium (MEEC) Teacher of the Year Mary O'Connell (foreground) credits the support of her administrators after receiving her award at the third annual MEEC Teacher of Year Banquet held at the Spring Valley Lake Country Club in Victorville. O'Connell teaches in the Antelope Valley Union High School District. Behind O'Connell are MEEC Board members (left to right) Cheryl Smith, Teresa Healy and Michael Haro.

During the awards banquet, Wendi was honored by one of her former students and MEEC Executive Board member, Desirea Haggard who presented her with her award. Haggard currently works as an Environmental Engineer with TXI Riverside Cement. "Wendi's efforts in the classroom and concern for taking care of the environment is one of the factors that helped shape me in my environmental career path," Haggard said.

All teachers were selected after nomination forms went out in early March to school principals and administrators. Winners were selected after a review of the nominations by MEEC Executive Board Members. The High Desert Academy Jazz Band provided live entertainment as everyone was treated to a well prepared meal in the beautiful surroundings of the Spring Valley Lake Country Club.

## MEEC's 2007 Students of the Year

Teachers weren't the only people honored for their environmental commitment in local schools and communities during this year's Teacher of the Year Banquet. Four High Desert teens also won awards for their efforts.

Brianna Lawrence of Desert High School on Edwards Air Force Base, was one of four students selected to receive MEEC's prestigious Student of the Year award. The other outstanding recipients were Sarah Landeros of Victor Valley High in Victorville, Melanie Promer of Excelsior Education Center, also in Victorville and Morwena Rowe of Sultana High School in Hesperia. Each student received a framed certificate and a gift card after being successfully nominated MEEC "Student of the Year" by a teacher from her respective school.

Each student spearheaded notable efforts on important environmental issues.

Brianna has been the leader for her school's campus clean-up and recycling program through her involvement with the Air Force Junior ROTC at Desert High School.

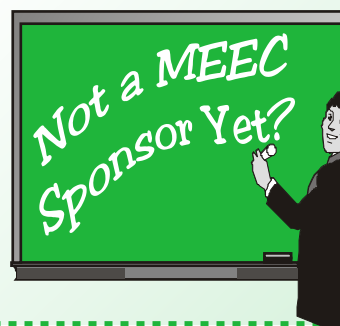
Sarah worked both with her school and Girl Scouts chapter to increase environmental awareness and stewardship through a variety of community projects.

Melanie has successfully completed the High School Certification Program for the Ocean Institute at Dana Point.

Morwena is a leader in the Green School Program at her school, which led the way in getting eighty percent of the school to implement energy conservation practices in the classroom.



2007 Teachers and Students of the Year gathered with MEEC Board members following the third annual awards banquet held at the Spring Valley Lake Country Club in Victorville.



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Our Team!



## Archaeology Comes Alive During Workshop at Edwards AFB

**M**ore than 30 educators had the opportunity to learn about archeology in the High Desert when MEEC, in conjunction with the Environmental Management Offices at Edwards Air Force Base, hosted the "Uncovering the Desert's Past" workshop for teachers of grades 3 - 8 on February 22.

The free workshop included a tour of the famed Pancho Barnes "Happy Bottom Riding Club" archeological site as well as a hands-on lesson using items from local digs to help teachers learn to integrate archaeology.

"I felt the best part of the tour was learning about the preservation of the desert and its history," Dian Hare said. Hare teaches fifth grade at Barstow Intermediate School.

Cole Parker, a 13 year veteran Archeologist contractor for Edwards AFB, presented during the event and shared many of his experiences with the teachers.

"Pancho Barnes' site and the old town of Muroc are both protected as non-National Register eligible sites," Parker shared with the teachers.

"I've always wanted to see Pancho's site and get an explanation of the archaeological significance, more than what you can get in a book," said Steve Abele, a 30-year teacher currently teaching at Branch Elementary School.

In addition to the guided tour, Parker presented the teachers with a sampling of some of the artifacts



*Teachers look over descriptions of items as they try and identify artifacts from a recent archaeology dig during the "Uncovering the Desert's Past" workshop at Edwards Air Force Base.*

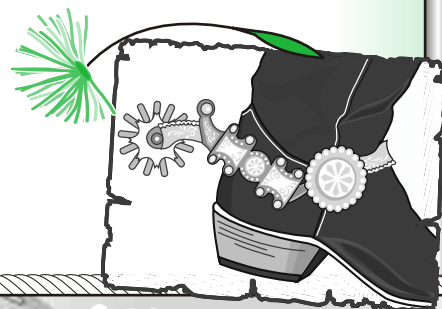
uncovered at a recent Muroc dig and asked them to identify them. Some were easy but others had everyone scratching their heads.

"The work of historians and archaeologists many times overlap," Parker said. "However, they differ in that historians study persons, places and events. Archaeologists study people, culture and adaptation."

Workshop participants also received curriculum developed by the Smithsonian Institute including lesson plans that meet national standards for science and history to help students explore the past through archaeology.

"Edwards AFB is one of our most passionate

partners, always excited to bring people to the base," said Violette Roberts, Executive Board Chair of MEEC.



**Happy Bottom Riding Club**



*Pancho Barnes*

## THANK YOU TO OUR MEEC 2006-2007 Sponsors

### MULTI PLATINUM

Antelope Valley AQMD	Two
City of Barstow	Two
Edwards AFB	Two
High Desert Power Project	Three
Lockheed Martin Aeronautics/Palmdale	Two
Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District	Five
City of Palmdale	Two
San Bernardino County Fire Department	Three

### PLATINUM

Town of Apple Valley	Three
California Portland Cement	One
Cement Industry Environmental Consortium	Five
Cemex	Five
L.A. County Sanitation Districts	One
Mitsubishi Cement	Five
Molycorp, Inc.	Two
TXI Riverside Cement	Five

### GOLD

City of Adelanto	Two
Air & Waste Management Assoc., Mojave Chapter	Five
Best, Best & Krieger	One
Daily Press	Five
Elementis Specialties	Two
Ft. Irwin/Dept. of the Army	Three

### GOLD (Cont'd.)

The Gas Company	Two
City of Hesperia	Five
Inland Energy	Two
Mojave Water Agency	Five
City of Needles	One
Northrop Grumman	Two
Omya of California	Two
Southern California Edison	Three
Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority	Three
Waste Management of the Antelope Valley	One

### SILVER

AFG Industries	Five
Boeing	Two
Searles Valley Minerals	Two
City of Victorville	Three
Women in Mining	Four

### BRONZE

Antelope Valley Press	Two
Desert Community Bank	Two
Southern California Aviation	Three
Southwest Gas	Five
Victor Valley Transit Authority	Three

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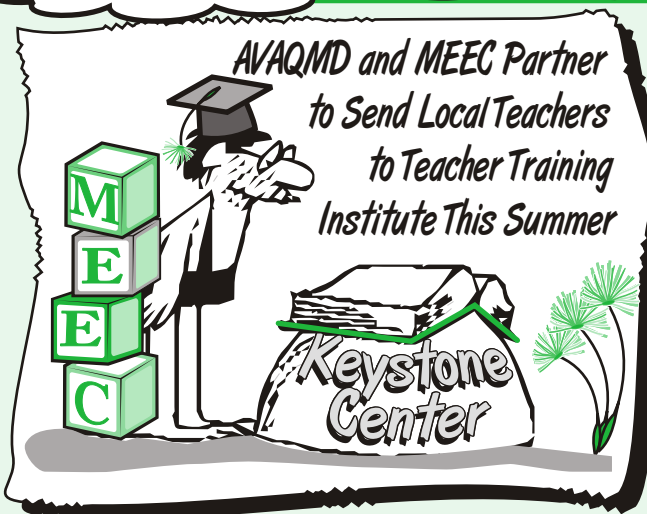
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MEEC has joined forces with three of its sponsoring partners - the AVAQMD, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics/Palmdale (LM Aero) and L.A. County Sanitation Districts (LACSD) - to sponsor four Mojave Desert teachers to attend the nationally - recognized Key Issues Institute teacher training program in Silverthorne, Colorado this summer.

Glen Baumbach of Lancaster High School in Lancaster is being sponsored by LM Aero; Kira Brown of Park View Middle School in Lancaster is sponsored by LACSD, Cammy Henderson of Shadow Hills Intermediate in Palmdale is sponsored by the AVAQMD, and Barbara Jacobs of Hesperia Junior High in Hesperia is sponsored by MEEC, a first time sponsor of the scholarship program. The three other sponsors have been funding Antelope Valley teachers to attend the Keystone Institute since 2001.

Educators who are competitively selected to attend the intensive, all expense paid, six day environmental education training, come away equipped with the process, skills and curriculum to investigate current environmental issues with their students, using the Keystone Center's standards-based framework. Local teachers who have attended the Center's programs have expanded their school science curriculum to incorporate the non-biased, science-based approach to environmental issues fostered by the center.

"Teachers are key to instilling environmental values and knowledge in their students," commented AVAQMD Operations Manager Bret Banks. "The AVAQMD is proud to support our educators in molding tomorrow's leaders."



# Piute Ponds: A Learning Oasis in the Desert

**D**id you know that the Antelope Valley has its own wetlands oasis which serves as an important stopping point for as many as 200 different species of migrating birds? Did you know it can be found on Edwards Air Force Base? Did you know this spectacular watershed is available for school field trips and bird watching excursions?

MEEC's Antelope Valley Advisory Council has been working with Victor Valley Community College's Teacher Learning Center students to develop standards based curriculum for teachers wishing to visit the site with their students, and to use it to teach about wetlands and watershed topics.

Piute Ponds consists of two excellent areas for bird watching and learning about migratory bird habitats. Also at key locations, there are more detailed kiosks of the other wildlife in and around the ponds such as beavers, ground squirrels, and other mammals.

"We are excited as we continue to bring all of the pieces together to be able to offer students and teachers an immersive, yet easy

to use curriculum before and after their visit to Piute Ponds," said Violette Roberts, MEEC Executive Board Chair.

Lessons plans are currently being created as well as learning kits and a website that will allow students to learn more about the wetlands prior to their trip. Then, with the support of the website, students will be able to continue their learning and monitor what is happening via podcasts from their own classrooms.

"We are really excited about working with Victor Valley Community College's teacher preparation program to develop this curriculum," said Roberts. "Especially when we were able to bring podcasting and the web to the table for students not just in our area, but potentially anywhere you can access the web."

Piute Ponds trips will be available as part of the EnviroBus Bucks Grant Program for the next school year. Stay tuned for more updates on the Piute Ponds curriculum and website.

## EnviroBus Bucks Field Trips Continue to Roll

**T**wenty-seven school bus loads of students took field trips to locales throughout the Antelope Valley and High Desert as part of MEEC's 2006/2007 EnviroBus Bucks program. Students from selected schools traveled to a variety of destinations including Edwards Air Force Base, Lockheed Martin Aerospace in Palmdale, Barstow Discovery Center, and Hole in the Wall in the Mojave National Preserve, to name a few.

Sixth grade teacher Jay Ganske of New Vista Middle School in Lancaster along with 115 sixth graders traveled to Piute Ponds, an enhanced natural marsh located on Edwards Air Force Base, to learn about the wetlands and watersheds. As luck would have it, Mr. Ganske's wife, Jeanne, a teacher at Nancy Cory Elementary in Lancaster, also received a grant to take 150 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders to Devil's Punch Bowl County Park, where her students had the opportunity to experience the spectacular geological processes with synclines, 300-foot high slabs of sandstone and erosion-formed canyons adjacent to the Great San Andreas Fault.



A student from Vista Colorado Elementary in Needles climbs through a rock fixture at Hole in the Wall in the Mojave National Preserve.

MEEC's EnviroBus Bucks program provides transportation grants for teachers to take their students on environmental field trips and offers hands-on learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

The program provides funding for school bus trips to selected sites which emphasize environmental education.

"We have found that students who are able to learn via field trips gain a more concrete understanding of the lessons from the classroom," said Violette Roberts, MEEC Executive Board Chair. "MEEC is happy to be able to offer students a more hands-on, place-based approach to learning."

Since its inception in 2005, the EnviroBus Bucks Program has continued to expand. In the 2007/2008 school year, MEEC Board members have approved an additional

\$10,000 to provide more field trips to local schools.

Applications for the 2007/2008 school year will be distributed in the early fall. The application will also be available soon at [www.meeconline.com](http://www.meeconline.com).



## YELC 2007: A Day of Learning, A Day of Fun!

Students from throughout the Victor and Antelope Valley's attended MEEC's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Environmental Leadership Conference (YELC) held at the High Desert Academy of Applied Arts and Sciences in Victorville on April 14th. The theme of this year's conference was "Every Drop Counts" and focused on water conservation.

All forty-five students in attendance at the day long conference were able to learn - through hands-on workshops - important information about the water cycle, California wetlands and water conservation methods for their homes, schools and communities.

"The students learned a great deal from an awesome group of presenters this year," said YELC Coordinator Cindi Wray. "It was through MEEC's partnerships with our sponsors like the LA County Sanitation Districts, that we were able to provide such an enriching learning environment for the students."

The three workshops presented during YELC were "When in Drought, Doing Without," "California Wetlands" and the "The Water Cycle." Workshop leaders brought in visual aids and other hands-on tools to teach the students about these important concepts.

One of the conference's highlights was the return of

several students from the first YELC conference who participated as Student Mentors for the day.

"I think it shows the value of YELC when you have past participants willing to come back to help other students learn the importance of environmental issues and conservation," said Wray. "I am looking forward to this year's participants also being able to return and contribute their experiences at future YELC events."

The highlight of the day for many of the students - in addition to the workshops - was the fun filled water games extravaganza that allowed the three student groups to compete for prizes. Each game focused on teamwork and games that stressed water conservation methods.



YELC participants learn about water conservation while having fun during a round of water games held in between workshops at the conference.

In appreciation for their participation, each student received a \$50 Savings Bond, an official conference T-shirt and a YELC backpack filled with school supplies. Students were also treated to lunch, snacks and an awards ceremony with their parents at the end of the day.

Following this year's conference, each participant received a proclamation from Senator Diane Feinstein, who congratulated each student for his/her participation and eagerness to help with environmental conservation.



**"More Than an Eyesore"** student winners of the Antelope Valley Illegal Dumping Task Force's essay contest gather for the awards ceremony in Lancaster on June 13, 2007. The essay contest — whose theme was "Illegal Dumping: More Than An Eyesore", attracted more than 300 entries from throughout the Mojave Desert area with three winners selected from 4 grade categories. Student winners from left to right are: Matthew Evans, Joy Learning Center, first place, grade K - 2, Sarabeth Lopez, Rancho Vista Elementary School, second place, grade 3 - 5, Ashley Armenta, second place, grade 6-8, Chloe Koslo, third place, grade 3 - 5, George Acosta, Joe Walker Middle School, first place, grade 6 - 8, Kyli Lucas, Mesa Grande Elementary School, third place, grade 6 - 8, Adam Rose, Desert Winds High School, first place, grade 9 - 12, and Jeremy Plant, Granite Hills High School, rear, second place, grade 9-12. Also pictured left to right: Rancho Vista Elementary School Principal Paula Sour, and teachers Linda Lotzgesell and Emily Ellsworth from Rancho Vista Elementary and Joe Walker Middle Schools respectively. Not pictured are K - 2 second and third place winners Antonio Garcia, Carmel Elementary School and Abigail Van Wyk, Keystone Elementary School; grade 3 - 5 first place winner Bethany Delatore, St. Timothy's School; and grade 9 - 12 third place winner Steven Maltman, Granite Hills High School. The "More Than an Eyesore" essay contest was sponsored by the Antelope Valley Illegal Dumping Task Force and the Mojave Environmental Education Consortium (MEEC). MEEC is a public-private, non-profit partnership of more than 40 local businesses and organizations that links High Desert educators with quality environmental education resources to help them meet educational standards, free of charge. To learn more about MEEC's many services to teachers, visit [www.meeconline.com](http://www.meeconline.com), or call (760) 245-1661, ext. 6101.

## Student Essay Winners





## AVAQMD Turns 10 Years Old *Cont'd from pg. 1*

management district. The move represented the final step toward greater control over local decisions, which began with the AVAQMD's creation in 1997.

Most importantly, since the District's inception, residents have breathed some of the cleanest air in the region's history. Last summer, only 16 days exceeded the 0.08 ppm federal eight hour ozone standard, a 61% reduction from 2002, when 41 days exceeded the standard. 2006 also marked the second cleanest ozone season in the Antelope Valley's monitored history.

Other noteworthy milestones in the AVAQMD's decade-long history include:

- Replacement of a mandated carpooling regulation for businesses with a voluntary rideshare program (1999);
- Partnership forged with Antelope Valley Dustbusters group to explore new ways of reducing blowing dust in the region (1999);
- Presentation of inaugural AIRE (Achievement in Reducing Emissions) Awards to local entities who made significant contributions to reducing air pollution (1999);
- Bret Banks named District's first Operations Manager (2000);
- District successfully spearheads drive to redesignate the Lancaster Clean Cities Coalition to include the entire Antelope Valley (2001);
- Funding provided towards the first compressed natural gas and liquefied natural gas filling stations in the Antelope Valley (2002);
- New AVAQMD website provides "real time" air quality data and daily forecasts (2003);
- Over \$400,000 awarded locally in Carl Moyer Grant funds to clean up emissions from old, heavy-duty engines (2004);
- "Buy Back" program launched to take gross polluting, pre-1986 vehicles off the roads (2005);
- Eldon Heaston replaces retiring Air Pollution Control Officer Chuck Fryxell (2006);
- More than \$400,000 in Lower Emissions School Bus Program funds awarded to Antelope Valley schools for the replacement or repowering of existing diesel fueled busses (2007).

## AVAQMD Awards Over \$1 Million in Lower Emission Heavy Duty Engine Grants *Continued from pg. 1*

Camarillo Engineering, Inc. received \$179,822 in Moyer Funds to repower an off-road scraper with a new, lower emission diesel engine and a particulate retrofit. This project will reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by 6.56 tons and PM emissions by .281 tons, which amounts to an 85% reduction in PM emissions.

Royster Bros. received a grant in the amount of \$221,816 dollars for the retrofit of four dual engine, off-road diesel fueled scrapers with level 3 diesel particulate traps to reduce previous emissions by 85%.

Lovex General Engineering Corporation was awarded \$26,190 for the retrofit of one off-road diesel fueled motor grader, which will reduce PM emissions by 85% or .041 tons.

The AVAQMD Board closed the 2006/2007 fiscal year for Moyer funds by granting W.M. Bolthouse Farms \$328,377 to repower twelve diesel irrigation pumps with new, electric, zero-emission motors. The project will reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by 31.3 tons and reduce PM emission by .88 tons.

**It's HERE!**  
**The AVAQMD's Commemorative 10 Year Report!**

**Get Your Copy by calling 661-723-8070 today!**

## P2 Week Organizers Help Prevent Pollution at the Source "It's An Attitude!"

**T**hat's the message from coordinators of National Pollution Prevention Week (NP2W) across the country. Nationwide, local governments, state and federal agencies, businesses, and others are teaming up to hold events that celebrate and promote the benefits of pollution prevention.

**Pollution Prevention** (or "P2" for short) is recognized as an effective tool for **protecting the environment** and the economy since it serves to **eliminate pollution** at the source before it is generated. "For industry, utilizing P2 techniques can result in more efficient, less-polluting industrial processes that improve competitiveness and the environment," said Kim Wilhelm with the California Department for Toxic Substances Control, one of

the sponsors of P2Week. "For the public, practicing P2 in the home, in the garden, and on the road through activities such as using alternative cleaning methods, purchasing an electric mower, and carpooling to work can help improve the **quality of the local environment**."

P2 Week is sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Consortium of California Pollution Prevention Committees, and the Western Regional Pollution Prevention Network.

Each year during NP2W, the AVAQMD's highest honor - the William "Pete" Knight AIRE (Achievement In Reducing Emissions) Award - is presented to local entities for significant contributions to protecting air quality.

**P2 Week is September 17-23 !**



## Remembering George Allie



**G**eorge Allie passed away on June 21<sup>st</sup>, after a courageous battle with cancer. George served as the District's System Administrator since its inception, and was a long time and distinguished member of the Administrative Services team. His dedication and commitment to attainment and maintenance of the District's technology infrastructure will be missed by those who knew him.

## AVAQMD STAFF

Bret Banks ..... Operations Manager  
 Crystal Bates. .... Administrative Secretary  
 Chris Anderson ..... Air Quality Specialist  
 Sally Sparks ..... Air Quality Specialist



### Antelope Valley AQMD

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